

education a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6—14 years must be enforced by the Central Government. The National Knowledge Commission has recognized that there may be concerns about federalism since school education is dominantly the responsibility of the State Governments. It has however suggested that legislation at the national level should be enacted requiring the States to enact Right to Education Bills within a specified time period, with the primary financial responsibility resting with the Central Government.

The National Knowledge Commission have also made a number of other suggestions including, *inter alia* schedule of norms and standards to be followed by the schools, specification for teachers, justiciability of the Right to Education, redressal mechanism and universal schooling etc.

In pursuance of Article 21A of the Constitution, a draft Model Right to Education Bill has been formulated and circulated as framework to the States/UTs with a view to seek their comments thereon. In order to motivate the State Governments to adopt the Model Right to Education Bill, 2006, it is proposed that the scale of funding under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) be made contingent upon enactment of appropriate State Acts on free and compulsory education where none exist, or suitable adaptation of existing Acts. The proposal to adopt the Model Bill has also been sent to the States/UTs for their comments.

Mark concession to SC and ST candidates

2779. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 607 given in the Rajya Sabha on 31st July, 2006 and state:

(a) whether Government do not give any mark concession to SC and ST candidates in the recruitment under Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether mark concession to SC and ST candidates is applicable in case of other services but is not being done in respect of selection of teachers for Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI):(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per the instructions issued by the Department of Personnel and Training of the Government of India on Reservations and Concessions to SCs and STs, where an educational qualification has been prescribed in the Recruitment Rules, all candidates including SC and ST candidates should satisfy the said qualification. Similarly, when a minimum number of marks or a minimum grade is also prescribed as part of the educational qualification, the minimum marks/grade so prescribed shall also uniformly apply to all candidates including SC and ST candidates.

Appointment of consultants by UGC

2780. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the University Grants Commission appointed a number of consultants in the last year;

(b) the details of such consultants;

(c) to what extent universities are being by-passed by UGC through informal, ad-hoc, improvised methods and decisions;

(d) the steps proposed to streamline the UGC to make it an institution of excellence;

(e) whether Government have been monitoring the neglect of universities and their administrations; and

(f) the steps proposed to rectify these tendencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) As per the information furnished by the University Grants Commission (UGC), two consultants have been appointed in UGC for Legal & Finance. Legal consultant has been appointed for the purpose of dealing with court cases concerning UGC and the other consultant has been appointed to deal with the matters concerning finance.

(c) to (f) As per the information furnished by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Universities are the active participants in the decision making process of the UGC. The policy decisions of the Commission and guidelines on various subjects are formulated in consultation with the academicians drawn from the university system who